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TAGS: NATO PGOV PREL  
SUBJECT: U.S. UPDATES NATO ALLIES ON MISSILE DEFENSE PLANS

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, Reasons 1.5 (b & d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Under Secretary Eric Edelman and Missile Defense Agency (MDA) Director LTG Obering met with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer on June 5, and then informally with NATO PermReps, to update them on the status of U.S. Missile Defense (MD) plans in Europe, negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic, and responses to Russian public statements and misinformation about U.S. MD plans. As part of this update, Edelman and Obering briefed Allies on recent Congressional budgeting actions on MD and the test program for the system. Edelman stressed U.S. sincerity in wanting MD cooperation with Russia, and frustration that Moscow had not responded to U.S. proposals or agreed to expert talks. He also reassured Allies regarding U.S. readiness to address legitimate Russian concerns about "break-out."

¶2. (C) PermReps noted that recent Russian statements about U.S. and NATO MD plans appear to be politically motivated, necessitating that Allies continue to engage Russia in a transparent manner while urging that Russia work with NATO and the U.S. on potential cooperative MD programs. LTG Obering invited Allies to send MD experts to the U.S. for consultations and a tour of MD sites, and said that MDA is also willing to establish a "connection" between the MDA Colorado Springs site and NATO's Command, Control and Consultation Agency (NC3A). This connection would support an interactive information exchange system, to better explore how a future U.S.-NATO MD system might be linked together. In closing, the SYG said that NATO should accelerate its work to enable NATO MD efforts to keep pace with U.S. MD plans.  
End Summary.

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Bilat Meeting with NATO Secretary General

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¶3. (C) U/S Edelman told the SYG that MD bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic were going well and that the U.S. hopes to finalize them by the end of this year in order to begin implementing decisions in 2008. Despite recent publicity about Congressional budget cuts in MDA funding, there remains considerable bipartisan support for MD initiatives, and based on the current House and Senate versions of the proposed legislation, which still need to be conference, the Administration expects sufficient funding and flexibility to keep current U.S. MD plans in Europe on schedule. Noting recent statements by President Putin that some Allied cities may now be targeted by Russian nuclear forces, Edelman said that Poland had expressed interest in having a separate, bilateral security guarantee from the U.S. With NATO's Article 5 clause, the U.S. believes this is unnecessary. Edelman said that the U.S. would continue to

deal transparently with Russia, citing the May 11 letter ("still unanswered") from Secretary Gates to Defense Minister Serdyukov, proposing a meeting between U.S. and Russian MD experts. Edelman said that Russia may be concerned about the U.S. gaining possible first-strike advantages with MD assets in Europe, or "break-out" - both of which could be easily addressed in bilateral talks.

¶ 14. (C) In replying, the SYG said that it was clear that recent Russian statements were really more about "Russian politics" than MD, and that NATO will seek to finalize its own MD studies by the end of 2007, if not sooner, with recommendations for Heads of State to consider at the April '08 Bucharest Summit. He hopes that the Executive Working Group (EWG) will be able to finalize its report by October, endorsing the need for an MD system. Supporting U.S. efforts to remain transparent, the SYG said that Germany remains a key ally to lobby, and he also plans to discuss this issue with German FM Steinmeier. After noting that he would meet Polish President Kaczynski on June 6, the SYG agreed wholeheartedly that NATO's Article 5 clause was the only security guarantee that Allies need, not an "Article 5 Plus" for individual nations. Since the NAC will be in St. Petersburg for the NRC Anniversary on June 25-26, he suggested this might also provide a good opportunity for U.S. simulators to demonstrate MD scenarios. LTG Obering said he would see what could be done.

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PermReps Discuss MD, Transparency, Russia, and NATO MD Plans; U.S. Offers a "Tour For MD Experts" and an NC3A Link-Up

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¶ 15. (C) At the PermReps informal meeting, U/S Edelman reviewed bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic, recent Congressional legislation, U.S. efforts to remain transparent with Russia while inviting them to work with us collaboratively, and how to move this subject forward as an Alliance. As an example of U.S. openness, Edelman mentioned that Secretary Gates had specifically proposed U.S.-Russian experts, talks in June to address Russian concerns, but had yet to receive a reply. LTG Obering then briefed PermReps about MDA activities, clarifying what the recent Congressional appropriations' markups meant, and that the U.S. would seek to finalize host-nation agreement for MD site development before year's end. He stressed that of the \$8.9 billion FY08 request for missile defense, the House had funded \$8.3 billion and the Senate \$8.6 billion. He also reviewed three recent U.S. missile tests while offering to: (a) sponsor a visit by Allied MD experts to MDA sites in the U.S., perhaps as early as this fall, and (b) establish a communications link between MDA's Missile Defense Integration and Operations Center (MDIOC) in Colorado Springs and NATO's NC3A that would provide a secure, concrete, interoperable environment to permit sharing of MD data.

¶ 16. (C) PermReps spoke appreciatively of the briefing, praised the U.S. for its efforts to reassure the Russians while remaining transparent, and raised several issues for further review. After noting that Russian statements appeared to be more politically motivated than anything else, Poland and the Czech Republic confirmed that negotiations were proceeding well while both governments continue to address skeptical publics. Polish PermRep Nowak stressed that, above all, maintaining Allied unity was critical. Czech PermRep Fule echoed Ambassador Nowak, and added that they hope to see EWG taskings finalized by the June 14-15 Defense Ministerial to address NATO's MD tasking from the Riga Summit.

¶ 17. (C) Spanish PermRep Benavides asked if NATO should "do a common analysis of the threat" with the Russians, a suggestion supported by Germany and Belgium although other PermReps followed the UK lead in noting that this would not be easily achievable and could bog us down in a protracted debate. Bulgaria and Turkey both expressed concern about the gaps in MD coverage for their countries. Bulgaria asked if the recent Russian test of a vehicle with multiple warheads was a reaction to U.S. MD plans. UK Ambassador Eldon

stressed that a clear Allied response is needed on all MD and CFE issues, and one that does not encourage the Russians to think that they can "veto" Allied decisions. Praising the U.S. for being transparent while warning that U.S. bilateral plans may have consequences for European security, French Ambassador Duque also said that it was important for NATO and Allies to pursue a robust dialogue with the Russians, to allay their concerns and eliminate misunderstandings. He was echoed by Norway, who asked what other "reassurances" Allies might be willing to give to Russia.

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Alarming Russian Statements and Need to Maintain Allied Unity  
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¶8. (C) In his closing remarks, U/S Edelman said that continued NATO-Russia threat consultations would be a good idea, and noted that major differences exist that may not be easily bridged. We should not allow a de facto Russian veto over Alliance security by linking their agreement on the threat to the Alliance's timeline for defending itself. Edelman said that the U.S. was particularly disturbed by alarming Russian comments about targeting European cities with nuclear weapons, drawing Allies' attention to Secretary Rice's response that a threat against Europe is a threat against the U.S. given our indivisible security. In response to the question on Russia's recent test, Edelman said the Russian development of this multiple warhead capability was longstanding. The notion that the test was in reaction to U.S. plans is only convenient fiction for the Russians. Edelman also reassured Allies that the U.S. was willing to address Russian concerns about "break-out" via consultation, transparency and traditional verification measures. If and when the Russians agree to the proposed bilateral talks, these issues would be addressed. Edelman noted that Secretary Gates will be meeting with Russian Minister of

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Defense Serdyukov next week and that President Bush has invited Putin to Kennebunkport. The U.S. fully supports development of a NATO short-to-medium range MD system to ensure that our southern Allies are also protected by a missile defense shield. In the long run, this may be best provided by a NATO system that is connected (or as the SYG has said, "bolted") to U.S. MD assets in Europe. Ambassador Nuland also noted to PermReps that at the SYG's meetings with the President in Crawford, Texas, the President supported the idea of a complementary NATO-U.S. MD shield but was concerned that the NATO portion "keeps pace" with the U.S. MD plans.

¶9. (C) After thanking the U.S. delegation for coming to NATO, the SYG concluded by stressing that Allies agreed on four major points: the need to maintain Allied unity, which is the cornerstone of Alliance security; the need for continued outreach to, and transparency in our dealings with, Russia; that Allies will have an opportunity with NRC Defense Ministers next week, as well as at the June NRC Anniversary celebrations, to review how NATO and Russia can work together on this and other issues; and that the EWG needs to speed up the process to finalize its MD taskings, preferably before October.

NULAND